

Far From Home

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Summary: What was more important? Staying with the people you know and love in the comfort of the place you call home or venturing out away from them and discovering what lies beyond?

1. Chapter 1

Title: Far From Home

Fandom: 2009 revival of Hair, the musical

Rating: PG-13, for angst

Word Count: 1,397

**Author Note: This is the sequel to "Prepare For Battle" and will be mostly, if not all, from Sheila's perspective. It is set around the same time as chapter 3 of the previous story. Again, I want to take this opportunity to thank every single one of you who read my works. Please don't be shy and review if you have the time! I appreciate all comments, whether it be praise or constructive criticism.
Enjoy!**

_ "There is no remedy for memory, _

_ Your face is like a melody, _

_ It won't leave my head. " _

-Lana Del Rey

As the doors slammed shut, Sheila felt her heart wrench. This was it. There was no going back now.

"You're in a state of foolishness. Stand up and get off now," her conscience demanded.

However, it seemed her body was playing ignorant or was completely detached from her head, as she couldn't find the inner strength to stand and walk away from the future she was so rapidly, and perhaps hastily, paving for herself. A future that didn't involve New York.

The sudden jolt as the train departed the station finalised her decision. As her carriage lazily passed the platforms filled with daily commuters, tourists, families and friends, the tears began to flow. New York had been a welcoming home and she had been torn at leaving it and the people she loved there. Nevertheless, she knew that in order to truly spread her wings, she needed to break away and start afresh. There was too much left in New York that would have only hindered her. Sheila was a hawk; she hated to be grounded, much preferring to freely soar and live a life with no boundaries. Now though, her heart ached. She thought of her dear friends who had brought her such happiness and taught her about the true meaning of freedom, sharing the same views as her in regards to equality and peace. But the Vietnam War had shattered them apart and had ultimately robbed her of two men that she had loved in the process; Claude's life and Berger's will to live. In addition to leaving Berger, she was also leaving behind many others: Crissy, Hud, Woof, Dionne, Jeanieâ€¦ God, she sorely regretted leaving Jeanie. Just three months ago, she'd given birth to a beautiful baby boy. And how she hated to admit it, but the child reminded Sheila too much of Claude, with his wisps of blonde hair and his playful, bright eyes. Allowing the tears to silently cascade down her cheeks, she recalled the first time she'd cradled him, how just holding him in her arms had lifted her spirit somehow, seemed to relieve her of all the burdens that had been so heavily weighing her down. Jeanie's baby had brought the Tribe, with the exception of Berger, back together and made them all realise that there was life after death.

Suddenly feeling overwhelmed, Sheila mustered enough composure to rise from her seat, walk calmly down the aisle and lock herself in the toilet, where she freely sobbed, knowing that the sound was blocked out by the loud whir of the train as it raced along the tracks. She was a coward. Her friends who remained in New York were facing the struggle head on, whilst she was taking the easy route out; running away from it all.

She had never realised that decisions could be so difficult, yet also so easy to make.

She had never realised just how painful it would be.

Her heart had sunk to the bottom of her stomach, rolling about in despair and aching indecision, making her feel sick. One half wanted her to turn back and return to New York. The other cried for her to strive onwards and do what she had settled on doing. But what was more important? Staying with the people you know and love in the comfort of the place you call home or venturing out away from them and discovering what lies beyond?

Ten minutes later, Sheila took a deep breath and emerged, returning quietly to her seat. She was quite stunned to find a smart-looking man had taken the seat opposite and was quite hesitant at joining him at the table. He gave a friendly smile as she slid back into her seat and, remembering her manners, returned the smile.

"It's a busy train this morning! This was the only seat left, as I noticed yours was reserved. I hope you don't mind?"

The young man couldn't have been that much older than Sheila. He was relatively handsome in appearance, with crew cut brown hair and piercing blue eyes. His smart attire of a blue shirt and black trousers suggested he was from a wealthy background.

"No, not at all," Sheila smiled and averted her eyes to the scenery outside her window.

"You headed to D.C.?" The young man pursued a casual conversation.

Yes, Sheila thought to herself, but I'm regretting it. For a moment, she let her mind wander before realising that she hadn't replied.

"Yes! I'm really sorry|I have a lot on my mind|"

Sensing the girl's discomfort, he tried to keep the conversation topic neutral.

"Forgive me, I've been quite rude. I haven't even introduced myself," he extended his hand across the table. "I'm Michael."

She shook his hand with a grin. "Sheila."

"Well, Sheila," he glanced at the approaching drinks trolley. "Can I get you anything to drink?"

* * *

><p>As she sipped her coffee, Sheila felt herself begin to relax, the tight knots that were in her stomach from her distraught mood earlier starting to uncoil.</p>

"So, do you commute often?"

"Not really. I was visiting my sister in New York. What about yourself?"

Sheila took a deep breath.

"No|this is my first time out of New York in a long time," she admitted, fumbling distractedly with her coffee cup.

"I see," Michael cocked his head, trying to understand. "New York's a brilliant city. Why leave?"

Sheila bit her lip.

"I'm visiting family," she lied.

Guilt began to prod at her accusingly. Michael seemed a genuinely nice guy, one whom she felt she could be comfortable speaking to about anything, yet she couldn't bring herself to reveal the real reason behind her trip. She didn't want to divulge such details yet; they were still too raw. Instead, she diverted her attention away from herself.

"So, are you working?"

Michael glanced up at the girl in front of him and smiled. She was attractive; flowing blonde hair that stretched well past her shoulders, curious brown eyes tinged with a hint of green, wearing a simple outfit of jeans and a maroon chiffon blouse.

He shook his head in response.

"Not at the moment. I'm concentrating on university. I'm studying business management," he took a sip of his coffee, absent-mindedly glancing out the window. "It wasn't what I initially planned but it saved me from being drafted."

The tears threatened to engulf her once more as the subject of conscription arose. Claude too would have been able to avoid it, if only he'd burned his goddamned draft card like Berger. He'd agonised over the decision, before finally accepting his fate and heading off to fight in Vietnam. But it wasn't just the grief of losing him that made her leave; more painful, was the stark reality that she was not enough for Berger. It was not she who could complete him, make him happy, drag him from the deepest hole that he was still currently stuck in and save him. No. He needed Claude to save him. But Claude couldn't, because Claude wasn't able to save himself.

In the aftermath of Claude's death, Sheila had been the one to rush and comfort Berger, hoping they could ease their sorrows with each other. Yet, he had lashed out and shoved her away; withdrawing into his broken shell, his anger fuelled with staggering amounts of alcohol and narcotics. She had been left in a tangled heap on the ground, startled and sobbing. Thrown away like a child's unwanted toy that they had outgrown or got bored of. She was easily disposed of.

That night, Jeanie and Crissy had accompanied her back to her apartment and spent the night trying to console her. But even when they finally fell asleep, curled up together in her bed, nothing had eased Sheila's aching heart as it shattered into pieces. That following morning, she woke to find garish clouds of black and blue around her wrists where Berger had gripped her so hard.

In the end, her only excuse to stay had been for Jeanie.

Suddenly, she felt two warm hands take her own, before being enveloped in a comforting hug. She hadn't noticed Michael had shifted beside her.

"I'm sorry for whatever I said. I'm so sorry," he whispered.

It was then Sheila realised that no matter how far away she went, no matter how hard she tried, she could not erase memories.

2. Chapter 2

Title: Far From Home

Fandom: 2009 revival of Hair, the musical

Rating: PG-13, for angst

Word Count: 1,151

Author Note: There is always at least one chapter which everyone must plough through to get all the details and, unfortunately, this is the one for my story! :P I promise the next chapter will be better. As always, thanks to all who do read (I know you are out there!) and please do review if you have the time: all comments; good and bad, are welcome. Prepare for more angst. Enjoy!

"_Watching you sleep for so long,
>Knowing that I can't turn the rain into sun any more,
I've given you all that I have,
>Now I stand here, too scared to hold your hand,
Afraid you might wake to see,
>The monster that had to leave."

-We Are The Fallen

Lying awake, blanketed in the darkness, Sheila was once again silently battling with her mind and heart. Her plans were tangling with her emotions; a risky situation that she knew could potentially hinder her " or worse " trap her in New York, never again to summon the courage to escape. She knew dwelling on the emotional side of things for much longer would force her to surrender the plans she had spent all night carefully forming, and then she would forever be niggled by the thoughts of what life would have been like had she ventured out with the city. She glanced at the clock on her bedside table: 3:12AM. For a few moments, she remained still and quiet, listening to Jeanie's soft, rhythmic breathing beside her.

Jeanie had been quick to establish a sleeping pattern for Samuel in order to help him on the route to sleeping through the night. The first month, as had been anticipated, had been the worst, with the child only sleeping three to fours hours at a time before disturbing them both during the night, resulting in the pair sharing sleepless evenings together. It had been a great relief to them both last week when they were able to indulge in a full night's sleep uninterrupted. At this moment in time, Sheila was relieved. There would be nothing worse than Samuel shrieking awake just as she was slipping out. She couldn't bear the thought of being caught red-handed by Jeanie and, even now, just the very thought of having to explain to her friend was enough to bring a dull ache to her stomach. The girl sighed. Who was she kidding? If she were caught, she would have to lie. And lying to one of her closest friends would be more painful than just leaving without a word.

Convinced that the younger girl was most definitely asleep, Sheila took a deep breath and gingerly slipped out of bed. Then, she deftly tiptoed across to Samuel's crib. A peaceful expression lay on his face, his tiny hands clenched into two miniature fists at either side of his head. Sheila leant in and planted a kiss on the child's forehead, her hair tickling his cheek lightly. She would miss him and his cheeky smile, his contagious laugh. She would miss seeing him grow up. The very thought brought tears to her eyes. Reaching the door, she steeled one final glance at Jeanie, before grabbing the bag she'd packed earlier from under the sofa, changing into clean clothes and leaving, stuffing her pyjamas into her bag as she did. As she locked her apartment door for the last time, she hesitated and

glanced at the silver set of keys in her hand. She slid them under the doormat, butterflies forming in her stomach.

She had no use for them anymore.

* * *

><p>Sheila arrived at Manhattan's Penn Station with just five minutes to spare; a deliberate act that she had meticulously planned out. She did not want to be hanging around waiting, giving her brain that opportunity, that crack in the door, to bring troubling thoughts into her mind and attempt to convince her to go back home. Although she walked with purpose, the young girl was unaware of what was going on around her; blanking it out. She was running purely on adrenaline, her mind on auto pilot, running through the plans, times and platform that she had spent the last few days searching and memorising, careful not to run the risk of leaving a trace of her plans behind her. She had managed to walk to Penn Station just two days prior and noted she would need to take the 4.40AM 151 Northeast Regional to Washington DC. According to the timetable, it would arrive in Union Station at approximately 6.55AM, well before Jeanie would waken. The thought momentarily frightened her. She would have traveled 227 miles, and the Tribe would be none the wiser. Without stopping, she scanned the glowing departure board to check her platform, passed through the turnstile and headed to her coach. Only then did she hesitate, before taking a deep breath and climbing aboard.<p>

* * *

><p>As the sun bled in through the blinds and gently illuminated the bedroom, Jeanie stirred. She lay still for a few moments, her mind hazy from sleep, before rolling over to discover Sheila's side of the bed empty. Nevertheless, she was not alarmed; the girl was often an early riser and often scooped up Samuel from his crib and into the kitchen with her whilst she prepared breakfast to allow Jeanie another precious half hour of sleep. Rising, she padded into the lounge, where a sudden sharp cry stopped her in her tracks. Turning on her heel, she followed the cries back into the bedroom and discovered a squirming Samuel in his crib, his azure blue eyes meeting hers, glistening with tears. Odd. Perhaps he'd been restless and Sheila had put him back down after feeding him? Gently lifting her son into her arms, the young girl was stunned as he began to shriek and howl much louder than one would expect of a child so small. His face turned an angry red as the tears poured down his cheeks. It was enough to unsettle Jeanie.<p>

"You can't be hungry, Sheila never forgets to feed you in the morning if she'd up before meâ€|"

Then, a low grumble rising from the child's stomach confirmed her doubts.

"Sheila?"

She called out the girl's name as she padded through into the kitchen. She gasped, confusion spreading across her face. With Samuel still inconsolable, she continued to prepare the milk formula and breathed a sigh of relief when he immediately calmed. However, a troubling twist in her stomach still remained. Where was Sheila? Only one scenario seemed viable; she'd had to go out for something.

Perhaps she discovered there was no bread left and had gone out to buy some? Maybe she'd forgotten to tell her that she was heading out someplace early with Crissy or Woof?

Despite finishing his bottle, Samuel still seemed restless and vocal.

"You know something, don't you, Sam?" she whispered, placing the baby back into his crib as she proceeded to change clothes.

But, as she opened the wardrobe, another gasp escaped her mouth. It revealed a secret that Jeanie would never have expected. Half of the wardrobe was bare, the hangers hanging skeletal like, the shelves just as naked. All of Sheila's clothes were gone. Despairingly, Jeanie opened all the drawers and realised her handbag, purse and keys were missing. As if sensing his mother's discomfort, Samuel began to sob, his hands clutching at the wooden bars of his crib. As the girl continued to scour the room, something caught her eye as she passed the door. In the next room, by the front door, lay a set of silver keys on the doormat.

Jeanie broke down in tears.

End
file.